

# DRIVER'S SEAT

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## What You Can Expect From an OSUT Graduate

*This is the first in a series of articles detailing the institutional education we provide here at the Armor School, specifically for Armor and Cavalry soldiers. As you may already know, scouts and tankers start and return here for most of their formal military education. I'll be your guide through the various courses, weaving our way through until we reach the final goal of each course: Graduating a technically and doctrinally proficient soldier/leader. In this fashion, I believe everyone will understand how our dollars are being spent, what is being taught, and what to expect when the soldiers arrive at your orderly room. See you on the high ground!*

The United States Army undoubtedly has the best trained, most combat ready Armor units in the world today. Since the first American Cavalrymen mounted their horses to the most recent combined arms deployments, we have continually improved the training that prepares our soldiers and units for combat. Our ability to develop combat skills in the individual soldier forms the roots upon which readiness thrives.

While collective training is equally essential, we cannot accomplish it without a firm foundation of individual skills. Preparing Armor Crewmen and Cavalry Scouts for combat and success in the Army is a shared task. It begins

in 19K and 19D One Station Unit Training and continues throughout the soldier's enlistment. Institutional training, attentive leadership, and experience interact to hone our soldiers into effective unit members.

Armor Crewman and Cavalry Scout training begins at the 1st Armor Training Brigade, Fort Knox, Kentucky. Three battalions within the brigade, 5-15 Cavalry, 2-13 Armor, and 1-81 Armor, conduct One Station Unit Training (OSUT) for all Armor Crewmen and Cavalry Scouts in the United States Army. In OSUT, we focus on providing training that will ensure each graduate can accomplish basic soldier tasks and can function as a Skill Level 1 loader, observer, or driver. Both the Armor Crewman and Cavalry Scout Programs of Instruction (POI) provide demanding training within a relatively short period of time. Drill sergeants and tank/track commanders/instructors assigned to the training battalions, as well as subject matter experts from 3-81 Armor (also in the 1st Armor Training Brigade), combine their efforts to teach and sharpen these essential skills.

The development of the discipline, motivation, and commitment starts the first day of OSUT. Soldierization is a tough, comprehensive process that transforms civilians into soldiers, and this soldierization process is the com-

mon thread that permeates all OSUT training. During the first eight weeks of OSUT, we focus our training on basic soldier skills. This instruction encompasses a wide variety of tasks that prepare Armor Crewmen and Cavalry Scouts for military life and teach them the essential skills necessary to survive on the battlefield. While basic skills are the major thrust during the initial two months, we also begin to introduce our soldiers to their MOS-specific training.

Throughout both the 19D and 19K POIs, we provide instruction and establish competence in 14 different areas, ranging from general military subjects to the situational training exercise (STX). Within these 14 areas, we teach them how to qualify with their individual weapon, ensure that they meet the Army standard on the APFT, and instruct them on basic first aid, NBC, and individual tactical training. For OSUT Armor Crewmen and Cavalry Scouts, the primary difference between their programs exists in what training they receive on their respective vehicles and what they do during their STXs.

Within the 15-week 19D POI, we begin Bradley/HMMWV training in Week 3. From Week 3 through Week 15, we provide the 19D Cavalry Scout

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with a hands-on, technically-oriented block of vehicle instruction that focuses on Skill Level 1 crew tasks. We teach them about operating the M240C, the 25-mm Automatic Gun and the TOW; performing PMCS on and driving the BFV and the HMMWV; emergency procedures; BFV fording operations; and accident avoidance. During Week 13 of the POI, 19D soldiers live-fire both the M240C and the 25-mm, drive the BFV for eight hours and the HMMWV for four hours under cross-country and hard-surface conditions, and conduct a STX wherein they learn the basics of land navigation and reconnaissance techniques. The goal of this entire block of instruction is to familiarize the soldiers with the equipment, not to make them experts on it, and throughout OSUT we determine their proficiency through a series of successive gate tests.

Within the 13 week 19K POI, we also begin M1/M1A1 Tank training in Week 3. Our primary focus in this block is to properly instruct the 19K soldiers on how to be proficient drivers and loaders. We give the 19K soldier 16 miles of cross-country and hard-surface driving and 12 additional hours in the Tank Driver Trainer. We show them how to load and unload the 105-mm/120-mm main gun as well as how to clean and service it. During Week 11, we take them to the gunnery range and let them fire both the main gun and the M240 machine gun. In addition, their maintenance training is appropriately structured to include instruction on how to remove and install track and how to perform a proper PMCS on the M1/M1A1 tank.

Some of our soldiers do receive additional training. Through a rigorous evaluation and selection process, OSUT units choose soldiers who have distinguished themselves during training and subsequently enroll them in the Excellence in Armor (EIA) or the Excellence in Cavalry (EIC) Program. These exceptional soldiers have demonstrated the competency, commitment, motivation, and physical fitness that demands special development. They receive an additional 50 hours of in-depth reinforcement training on selected maintenance, COFT, live fire gunnery, navigation, and common skills. Gaining

unit commanders should identify and challenge incoming EIA/EIC soldiers by assigning them to positions that are MOS specific. Leaders should expect more from EIA/EIC soldiers because they possess the drive, ability, and potential to quickly integrate and assume responsibilities beyond those normally expected of Skill Level 1 soldiers.

As mentioned earlier, our primary goal within the 1st Armor Training Brigade is soldierization — how to look, walk, talk, and perform like an Army soldier. During the three months that we train these 19D and 19K soldiers, it is our responsibility to introduce these new recruits to all tasks associated with being an Armor Crewman or a Cavalry Scout. We give them a consolidated and intense introduction on how to shoot, maintain, and fight their vehicles. Once these soldiers graduate and leave Disney Barracks, we have provided them a basic set of skills that will need reinforcement and, depending on the qualities of the individual soldier, retraining. Keep in mind that these soldiers have just come from a highly-structured training environment. As a result, it is crucial that an effective “battle hand-off” occurs. Although these soldiers are MOS qualified, their level of knowledge is entry level specific and unrefined. These soldiers need a level of devoted and attentive leadership that will provide a positive training transition into the Army.

Within the 1st Armor Training Brigade, we are continually searching for ways to improve our training. If you have suggestions about OSUT training improvements or want input into our training methodology, I encourage you to contact us. Within the 1st Armor Training Brigade, we have already conducted and will continue to conduct Video Teleconferences (VTCs) with units in the field to receive feedback on the quality of our IET product. If your battalion or brigade would like to schedule a VTC with the 1st ATB, please contact S3, 1st ATB at DSN 464-4810/5840 or commercial (502) 624-4810/5840. Your input is valued and will be given the highest level of attention.